

# UNDERSTANDING PROBATION PERIODS: BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND BEST PRACTICES IN WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

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**Abstract:** *In most of the organization, success cannot leave without workers. However, human resource department faced problems in labour shortages, hard to find and recruit skilled talent and the disengagement among employees. To solve the problem, a probation periods should be taking place in an organization before turning the new employees into an official permanent staff. Probation periods serve as an evaluation period at the beginning of a new hires at their workplace. It aids in evaluate new hires based on their performance throughout the entire probationary period. This research aims to identify the problem occurs in the recruitment stage and state the purpose and benefits of probation period in terms of evaluating their role in assessing employee fit, performance, and organizational alignment. It is important to conduct an effective probation period, and the relevant ways and action had been included in the discussion part. Lastly, there is recommendation in the conclusion part and a successful recruitment process should always go through the probation period.*

**Keywords:** *Probation Period, Evaluation, Recruitment, New Hires, Workplace Fairness, Effectivity*

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## Introduction

Probation period is the time an employee starts working at a new workplace, it can be the first few days, weeks, or month before he or she becomes a permanent employee of the company (Homebase, 2023). Probation period aims to assess worker performance in authentic work environments, evaluate the organization's cultural fit, check the abilities and credentials stated in the interview, establish a methodical framework for the first stages of training, minimize the possibility of long-term, and reduce the risk of inappropriate hires. In Malaysia, probation period normally fixed between one to six months. Probation period beneficial both employers and employees. It aims to help employers to evaluate new hires' working performance based on company expectation, they could see if the new hires fit the position. For employees, the probation period is the time for them to learn new things, acclimate to the new working environment and enhance their skills. During this period, employees could show their potential and interest to make a good impression (Chan, 2024).

As probation periods are common in all workplaces, more and more company agreed that adopting probation in their company can effectively evaluate new hires' abilities. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), estimated 77% of organizations have a probationary period (Smith, 2023). This method is useful especially for company that highly depends on behavioural fit and corporate culture alignment. In Malaysia, it is essential for both employers and employees to efficiently manage probationary periods. By understanding how the probation period works in compliance with Malaysian employment rules, organizations can make better decisions. For both companies and employees, a probationary term is similar to a "trial run". Both employer and employee can assess if they are suitable for the position or working environment throughout the first phase of work (Lu, 2024).

Studies shows that the rate of resignation had increased from time to time. Research done by World Economic Forum had recorded the result of the factors that affect an employee's decision to change workplace. The result shows apart from financially rewarded, employee cares about their emotional feelings. For example, receiving reward or being praised for excellent job completion makes an employee feel valued. If a company has low levels of employee appreciation, employees may feel disrespected, not put in much effort, and not be motivated to get the job done. Employees may enjoy some challenging work as opposed to repetitive routine tasks and sometimes participate in new projects to increase productivity and reduce boredom. When employees find their job fulfilling and can be trusted by their colleagues, they will be happy to stay longer at the current workplace. In contrast, the resignation rate will raise as they do not get their desired emotional needs. Hence it was important to have a 'trial period' to let employee decide whether they should stay or leave before they are an official worker of the company (Ellerbeck, 2022).

In addition, when resignation rate gets higher, issues arise when labour shortages and human resource officers find it hard to get skilled and suitable employee. Study shows that re- recruiting process cost more than recruiting process (Mueller, 2024). This is because recruiting a new employee bear not only cost of recruiting but also cost of training, time for them to accumulate with working environment. When an employee left their position without a replacement, the productivity will decrease, and time needed until the new person who fits the position be hired. There are plenty of reason to resign, it could be lack of challenges, boredom, uncomfortable working environment and others. Hence, by having probation period the new workers could determine whether they are suitable for the current position and the cultural and working environment. This could avoid hiring the wrong worker for certain position. These

times provide companies with an extra layer of protection, reducing the dangers of making bad employment choices (Chan, 2024).

Organizations that offer probation period are mostly from private and government sector. Private Establishments Businesses in a nation that are privately held are known as private organisations (Kelly, 2024). The private organization also can be seen as any organization that set up for business purpose. It can be form up from an individual, partnership, corporation or agency. Employees in private enterprises mostly go through a probation period when they join the company. The probation period set by private organization normally one, three or six months depends on the organization's regulation and procedures. For instance, Infosys provides a one-year probationary term from the date of hire. Zomato, on the other hand, provides no probationary period. Almost all employees get paid during probation period, but it often will be lesser than the wage of a regular staff. However, after the probation period is ended, there is no guarantee that the salary will grow. An employee may become a full-time or permanent employee after the probation period based on the company decision. It does not guarantee the employee to hold the same position and not ensure an increase pay, unless the criteria had been stated on the contract or offer letter. (Keka, 2024).

In contrast, government organization can be known as a permanent or semi-permanent organisation that within a national or state government. These organisations are in charge of managing or supervising a certain industry, discipline, or field of study. Agencies may carry out their given tasks alone or in collaboration with other agencies or non-governmental organisations (UDC Library, 2024). Example of government organizations are Ministries, departments, agencies, and government-run public organisations. In Malaysia, a civil service officer must serve a probationary term of one to three years. Once the employer satisfies all requirements of the service plan, they are eligible for confirmation in. Government employees receive a certain compensation according to their salary grade throughout the probation period service (MyGovernment, 2024).

Although probation period brings countless benefits but it was a hard work in conducting a 'proper' probation period. Organizations or companies may have trouble setting up an effective probationary period. An ineffective probationary period with unclear goals and inappropriate evaluation does not bring any benefits to the company growth. There are a lot of criteria that can affect the result of probation period, for example training time, company culture, job complexity and evaluation standards (Teamflect, 2024). A good probation periods should enable a company to evaluate employee fit, performance and organization alignment. Probation periods may not be useful if these components are absent, which can result in high turnover rates or hiring for an inappropriate position. The following part will discuss more details about probation period including the benefits and best practice for fair and effective probation period.

## Literature Review

As mentioned in the previous part, probation period brings uncountable benefits. Knowing the ways to conduct probation period helps a company to improve employees' selection. A probationary term may apply when an employee begins a new position. Most companies adopt this approach to improve recruitment efficiency. Finding the benefits and drawbacks of the probationary period is essential to determine if a business should use it (Doe, 2023). This part mainly focusses on the advantages of using probation period in evaluate employee fit, performance and organizational alignment. A probation period is determined and provided by

an organization or company, even though employees have no right to decide how the probation period goes on, but the probation period benefits both employers and employees. Employers set the standard and evaluate the performance of employees, but once the probation period ended, the decision to continue working together is up to both employee and employer (Nicholas, 2021).

### **Benefits of probation period for employers**

A probationary period provides numerous benefits to employers in the process of recruiting and evaluating new employees. It is a critical phase that allows employers to assess the suitability of candidates for the organization's needs (Cobb, 2024). Probation period helps in evaluation based on new hires daily working performance. Unlike the recruiting process that only go through conventional interviews, probationary period gives employers an opportunity to determine a new employee's talent and level of acceptance to the new working environment. Employees may face actual obstacles regarding to their deadline, contribution or any relevant issues. From there, employers may see whether they fulfil the requirement and met company's expectations. This practical assessment lowers the possibility of recruiting errors and exposes more than any exam or interview to an employee (Birje, 2024).

Besides, the employers could enhance better onboarding procedure. By providing adequate training, support, and clear expectations, employees could enhance confidence and improve working performance. (Asure, 2023). However, an employee's abilities show how well they mesh with the position and organizations cultural. For example, if he or she has good teamwork, they can collaborate effectively with their colleagues, adjust to company's principles and shorten time needed to complete a task given. A specific and fair evaluation should be made as the abilities of new workers determine the efficiency and productivity of the team. The assessment results have a great impact on whether employees stay or leave. Management might evaluate a talent compatibility with team dynamics, organisational conventions and values throughout the probationary period. Long-term, this reduces the need for individual management, boosts performance and productivity, and improves employee satisfaction (Oladimeji *et al.*, 2023).

Apart from evaluation, probation period aids in cutting expenses of bad hires and employment benefits. It may cost a lot to hire and train a batch of new staff, especially when new hires prove unfit for the position. An organized probationary period with clear objective and effective training could reduce the risk of hiring the wrong person. When new employees encounter discomfort, they can also adjust themselves or discuss with their employers. If the problem can be solved, most of the employees are willing to stay longer in the company as an official employee (Indeed, 2024). In terms of employment benefits, the benefits such as health insurance usually not provided until a probationer turns into a regular worker. By doing this, employers can avoid additional costs until they decide to hire someone, they deem suitable (Asure, 2023). This cost-cutting strategy prevents companies from overpaying new employees who don't perform up to expectations. In this phase, employers are usually less bound by complex termination procedures, as employment contracts during the probationary period often allow for termination with shorter notice (Narayanan *et al.*, 2022).

Ultimately, a probationary period helps employers reduce the risk of hiring the wrong fit, which can negatively impact productivity and team morale. With this period in place, employers can

ensure that only truly qualified and compatible employees are absorbed permanently, making the hiring process more effective and efficient (Roba, 2024).

### **Benefits of probation period for employees**

In terms of new hires' perspective, several benefits could be gain throughout probation period. A probationary period offers many benefits to employees because it provides space to adjust to a new work environment without an immediate long-term commitment (Novia & Yuadi, 2023). Most of the company provide training, mentorship and other educational activities. This creates a good opportunity for newcomers to learn and growth. Employees able to enhance their skills, pick up new skills and adjust to new obstacles (Jeske & Olson, 2022). Their attitude and ability will be assessed based on their adaptability. Adaptability is an essential quality because it determines how well a person can adapt to a new work environment, and it is necessary because it can change the company's needs and performance (Herrity, 2022). A new worker may experience anxiety and perform poorly while starting a new job since it might be overwhelming. By attaining training during probation period, new employees have a higher chance of succeeding and get used to the company without the needless worry and tension that may come from confusion and unaccustomed. Employees could learn everything they need to enhance before become a regular worker (Asure, 2023). This not only helps to improve individual capabilities, but also promotes a culture of development and continuous improvement within the company.

In addition to skills enhancement, employees also have the opportunity to explore their new job. During this time, workers may determine if the position fits with their interests. It is a chance to determine if the organisation is a good match for their long-term professional goals (Berns, 2023). During probation period, employee exhibit proactive involvement by proactively interact with projects and coworkers. They usually will be given task exactly same or most similar with regular workers. This could ensure they know their exact job scope and be ready to take the responsibilities. Through the task given, they are given chances to ask enquiries, and clarify with things they do not know (Times Pro, 2024). These actions demonstrate an employee's value to the company and make sure employees has competent job exploration.

Besides, employees could receive feedback and make improvement throughout the entire probation period. During the time, new hires might benefit from receiving constructive criticism that helps them perform better. Ones could do better only when they gain more experience, knowing their weakness and put effort in eliminating it. Even though they no longer stay at the same company but the advises and feedbacks could help them perform better in future (Berns, 2023). It is a worthwhile educational opportunity that can advance their career. Most importantly, employees could maintain good relationship with coworkers before turns into a regular worker. A healthy working connection is established and any problems may be resolved quickly when employees are given constructive criticism and their opinions are welcomed. Effectively collaborate, exhibit a strong work ethic, and support a welcoming and inclusive workplace (Inspire, 2024).

Finally, probationary periods often come with additional flexibility in terms of employment (Jiang & Bi, 2024). For example, employees are usually subject to a shorter notice period if they wish to terminate their contract, giving them more freedom to make changes if the job is not a good fit. During this period, employees can also build good relationships with colleagues



and build professional networks that may be beneficial for their future careers. Overall, probationary periods not only help employees adjust to a new work environment but also provide a solid foundation for growth and development within the organization (Yella, 2020).

### **Best practice of fair and effective probation period**

All employers should take probation period seriously no matter it has a long- or short-term objective. Some of the company included probation in the employment contracts but they are often misused. The organisation benefited much from a successful probationary term, but implementing a "really effective" probationary period proved challenging (Nicola, 2024). Organizations may maximize the probation period to ensure a strong and successful team is formed. Probation period have their own set of factors to take into account, for example, adhering to employment rules and establishing clear expectations, a good practice helps in develop a better work culture. This part will discuss about the ways to conduct an effective probationary period along with examples.

#### **Set clear objective**

Establishing clear expectations at the very beginning is one of the most crucial elements of a successful probation period. Before conduct a probationary period, employers should have clear objectives, and they must know the exact requirement that can boost company's long-term successfulness (Cobb, 2024). By having a clear goal and knowing which criteria of new talent they are looking for, they could list out these requirements for talent selection and go through interview session. For talent that had been selected and passed interview session, they may go through probationary period. Supervisors should ensure that the new hire is aware of the expectations for attitude, collaboration, and productivity at work. In addition to facilitating the employee's rapid adjustment, this clarity will make it simpler and effective in evaluate their work at the end of the period. The duration and the conditions under probation period may be extended, should be made explicit in the contract (P. Jones, 2022). Changing goals and lack of clarity can lead to conflict and poor organizational structure. Hence, it is important to establish clear goals and expectation to avoid new employees' confusion.

#### **Provide exact or most similar job scope to new hires and document performance**

During the beginning of probationary period, employers should let employees go through their exact job scope. For example, showing employee what to do, the fundamental principles of company, compulsoriness to attend team meeting, requirement of consistent attendance that must be met, and training provided to new hires. Workers need to be fully aware of their duties, responsibilities, and expectations for performance. It's critical to provide thorough job descriptions, specify precise objectives, and explain what effective performance during the probationary term looks like. For better evaluation, new employees and their manager should both have an opportunity to review the entire probationary period, including the strength, areas of improvements, and whether there is extra training needed (Nicholas, 2022). Recording performance details such as discussions and observations is crucial throughout the probationary period. Tracking check-ins and progress will be a useful record as it can protect the company from future disagreements or allegations of unfair treatment. It's important to provide employees with written feedback that outlines the areas of concern and letting them know what to change if their performance does not meet expectations (Woodward, 2024). This could prevent problems regarding performance in future and determine whether the requisite standard is met.

### **Review employee's performance and provide feedbacks**

Employers should have review session with new hires along the entire probation period to receive their feedback and see if they have any concerns or inquiries. By reviewing the feedback, action can be taken on the spot, rather than wait until the end of probationary period. This can solve problems as they arise and prevent them from developing further. This promotes long-term development while ensuring that employees feel comfortable in their work. (Morris, 2022). Conversely, workers are given quick feedback too, if an employee is performing poorly, strategies can be implemented to help them become better, which also ensures that everyone can have the opportunity to seek advice and make required correction. Provides regular coaching and feedback helps new employees thrive during their probationary period. For example, weekly or biweekly check-ins enable supervisors to assess their employees' progress, provide helpful criticism, and discuss any difficulties they may be experiencing. (Woodward, 2024). Ensuring that an employee has every opportunity to succeed may be achieved in large part by providing assistance, such as extra training or resources. By providing probationers with an equitable chance, better work culture and motivation could be developed.

### **Ensure fairness during evaluation and know when to extend probation**

Besides, employers should be fair even there is no full disciplinary procedure throughout probationary period. There is no file to claim for wrongful dismissal, but employee could be claim for discrimination or automatic wrongful dismissal as soon as they start working. Therefore, employers should make sure they follow a fair dismissal procedure by providing proof and ensure the conceptual disciplinary procedures are followed (Cobb, 2024). Clear communication between employers and employees creates mutual understanding established clear expectation. Sometimes it may be necessary to extend the probation period if the individual demonstrates potential but has not yet fully met the basic performance requirements. A clear and detailed explanation should be given, along with a deadline and certain objectives that the worker must fulfil when extending probation. Any extension of the probation period must be subject to the conditions set out in the worker's contract (Jones, 2021). In sum, a written notification of the extension, including the justifications and requirements for successful completion, must be sent by the employer to the employee whenever an organization decided to extend their probation period.

### **Decision making**

Lastly, before the end of probation period, employers should make decision to terminate the employee or extent the service contract or probation. An employee is considered as official permanent worker when they have been notified with new extended contractual notice (Chan, 2024). However, employers should refrain from extending probationary period just because of the task or problems have not been resolved. In terms of termination prior, if there is evident regarding employee is unfit with their position, they could terminate or given chance to meet expected standards of performance (Nicholas, 2021). A final decision must be made at the end of the probationary period no matter they would like to confirm the employee's permanent status, extend the probationary period, or terminate their employment. Performance evaluation and appraisal records during the probation period need to serve as the basis for this selection. Employer should make sure all legal obligations are fulfilled, including providing the required notice and managing any rights, such as accumulated holiday pay, if the decision is made to terminate employment (Woodward, 2024). This could ensure efficiency of recruiting process and avoid hiring bad hires.

In sum, it is possible to fire an employee while they are on probation, however, notice and warnings need to be provided as probationer have the same rights as verified workers. Apart from job performance assessment on main task, some company may evaluate based on citizenship behaviour. The example of citizenship behaviour is volunteering to help others, provides new ideas, and work for extra hours. (Verlinden, 2021). These actions may show an employee's worth to the firm and help an organisation succeed; hence, new hires that go through probation period should be enthusiastic, and willing to help out beyond their regular duties.

### **Analysis and Global Comparisons on Probationary Period**

Probationary periods play an important role in assessing the suitability of new employees, but their effectiveness is not guaranteed in all situations. While they help employers identify suitable employees and reduce the risk of ineffective hiring, there are some drawbacks to consider. From an employer's perspective, probationary periods can be an effective screening tool, but if not managed well, they can cause potentially excellent employees to leave the organization due to stress or lack of support. Some organizations may also abuse probationary periods by setting them too long without fully benefiting employees, which can reduce motivation and job satisfaction.

For employees, probationary periods are an opportunity to adapt to the work culture and prove their abilities. However, without adequate training or clear evaluation criteria, this period can create unnecessary uncertainty and stress. Employees who feel unappreciated during the probationary period may be less motivated and unable to perform at their best. Therefore, to ensure that probationary periods achieve their objectives, organizations need to provide clear guidelines, provide regular feedback, and balance the interests of employers and employees to create a more productive and fair work environment (Novia & Yuadi, 2023).

In addition, probationary period practices vary from country to country, depending on labor laws, work cultures, and organizational priorities. In Germany, probationary periods typically last between three and six months, with an emphasis on intensive training to ensure that employees are able to meet the organization's expectations. In Japan, probationary periods can last between three months and a year, reflecting a work culture that emphasizes loyalty and compatibility with the organization (Kiyono, 2021). In contrast, in the United States, probationary periods are more flexible, typically between 30 and 90 days, but employees can be dismissed more easily during this period (Symonds, 2024).

In Malaysia, probationary periods are typically set at between one and six months, with the opportunity to be absorbed as a permanent employee based on performance (Narayanan et al., 2022). However, key challenges in its implementation include lack of clarity in assessment and lack of appropriate training. Through comparison with other countries, it can be seen that probationary periods are not just an assessment period but also part of a broader workforce strategy. Therefore, Malaysia can learn from global practices to ensure that probationary periods are more structured, fair, and beneficial to both employers and employees.

### **Conclusion**

Probationary period brings advantages and benefits both organization and employees. It was a powerful tool for evaluating employee fit within an organization. It allows employers to observe their workers' performance, adaptability and learning capacity while providing



training to enhance their skill at the same time. By providing new hires with a structured way to assess their new role, the risk of poor hires, poor teamwork, and fostering communication could be reduced. This creates a better working environment, and ways to improve performance can be clearly identified. When a probationary period is properly managed, it strengthens productivity and ensure the level of contribution of new hires met expectations.

In terms of recommendation, it was encouraging employers to list out clear terms and conditions during the probation period. It can include the job scope, workload, time of working, leave, attendance and requirements. An unclear terms and conditions might bring issues or misunderstanding after newcomers joined the company. Therefore, a clear and sharp objective should be set. Besides, poor structured probation process may lead to confusion as well. Employers should ensure the performance metrics and expectation are clear from the outset. Most importantly, chances should be given to all newcomers in completing a task. They should have the chance to voice out their opinions and get involved in the company project, regardless the size of project. By minimizing biases during evaluation process, the real and exact evaluation report can be made in selecting the suitable employees.

In addition, when the probation period offers a safety net for both parties, a well- designed recruitment strategy that can see employee's values should serve as the foundation in hiring employees. Besides, the environment of working place often affects the feelings of probationer. Having a place where workers may voice concerns or seek clarity on responsibilities or expectations is equally vital. During these sessions, employer may point out the employee's strong points and provide helpful criticism for areas that need development. If the probation period offers a safety and comfortable environment, it will be a point for probationer to stay at the workplace longer. The probation period then becomes an extension of this process, providing an additional layer of assurance.

The probationary period is more than just employers "evaluation stage". It gives employee a chance to determine if the position and company fits their ability and career objective. An employee may resign if they decide not to stay longer when the position is far away from what they expected, which would not waste both parties time and prevent future disengagement. Conversely, probationary period reduce risk of hiring the wrong employees. It is better to let an unqualified worker left, rather than having a bad fit remain on staff.

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